



TOOLBOX OF IDEAS

Alphabox Strategy

ALPHABOXES can be used in a variety of ways. In this example, alphaboxes are used to reflect on a reading or a unit of study.

Directions:

1. After reading or completing a unit of study, students work in pairs or small groups to brainstorm words that reflect important parts of or ideas in the text or unit.
2. Students place words in the appropriate alphabox trying to complete as many boxes as they can. They must be able to explain why each word is important.
3. The class can then try to compile a list of the most interesting words generated by the groups, making a point to hear each justification. The result will be a lively discussion of the vocabulary and different perspectives about the focus text or unit.

Alphaboxes can also be used as a brainstorming strategy to elicit students' prior knowledge and to activate their learning.

Directions:

1. Each student is given a blank alphabox sheet (see below) and is asked to think of a word or phrase associated with the given topic and match them to each letter in the alphabet. For the Canada unit, for example, the "M" box can be filled with the word "moose" and "speaks French" could be written in the "S" box.
2. As they independently brainstorm, their thoughts are recorded (in no particular order) in the alphabet boxes.
3. Students work alone for at least 10 minutes generating relevant words and ideas ("think").
4. Students then move into small groups and work together to fill in letter boxes they have not completed ("pair").
5. The teacher puts the blank Alphabox on the overhead projector, and the class reports out and "shares" their ideas.

Sample Alphabox (make larger):

A	B	C	D
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E	F	G	H
I	J	K	L
M	N	O	P
Q	R	S	T
U	V	W	XYZ

Sources:

- ❖ Hoyt, L. (1999). *Revisit, reflect, retell*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- ❖ Jones, R. C. *ABC Brainstorm*. Available:
<http://www.readingquest.org>.